

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Wessington School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

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Dates of On Site Visit: September 30, 2002

Date of Report: October 3, 2002

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that if not addressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child find articles
- Screening articles
- Academic files
- List of student referrals
- Student file reviews

- Referral forms
- School handbook
- IEDA application for funds
- Child count SAT-9 participation
- DACS
- Training needs summary
- Personnel records
- Newspaper
- Parents rights
- Parent survey forms

Promising Practice

Staff participation at in-services with a variety of topics throughout the past 2 years was cited as a promising practice by the steering committee.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee determined areas of Meets Requirements in their self-assessment to be that the school district policies and procedures are in place to ensure the correct child find procedures for all children Birth –21. Child find procedures are properly carried out, interagency meetings are held to insure correct placement of all children and the TAT committee helps with concerns about students before referral. The committee also indicated referral forms are available in the special education room and that a year to year list of referrals needs to be kept.

The district follows guidelines of the comprehensive plan, records of attendance are marked on the IEP, students are placed in the least restrictive environment, state and district wide assessments are given according to the IEP. 100% of students completed standard based given to classes in the regular curriculum, goals/objectives are written in accordance with the comprehensive plan. Policies are consistent with the requirements for children who are suspended or expelled and staff receive adequate training on special education and related services.

Needs Improvement

Based upon their self-assessment, the steering committee determined areas requiring improvement are to get parent signature when transportation reimbursement is refused by parents and to maintain a list of children screened every year.

Out of Compliance

The special education teacher does not have a current teaching certificate.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of Meets Requirements for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas in need of improvement for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Out of compliance

24:05:23:01. Educational evaluator. An educational evaluator must possess a valid teaching certificate and must have training in individual and group tests to be administered.

24:05:16:02. Definitions Qualified personnel," personnel who meet certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements approved or recognized by the division for the profession or discipline in which the person is providing special education or related services, including early intervention and early childhood services.

Through interview the monitoring team confirmed that the special education teacher does not currently possess a valid teaching certificate.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- Parent rights
- School handbook
- Newspaper article
- Comprehensive plan

Meets Requirements

The steering committee determined areas of Meets Requirements in their self-assessment to be all children receive a free appropriate education, the district complies with all federal and state guidelines in accordance to FAPE, parents are kept up to date concerning all new special education laws and their rights and the district policies are consistent with the requirements for children who are suspended or expelled.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of Meets Requirements identified for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Parent surveys
- Contact data sheets
- File reviews
- Prior notice
- Parent rights
- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher surveys

Promising Practice

Teacher and parent input into every individual education program was sited as a promising practice by the steering committee.

Meets Requirements

Based upon the data reviewed, the steering committee concluded the district follows the comprehensive plan requirements concerning evaluations. Teachers in the district need to be better educated in the area of special education. Evaluations are given with consent of parents and parent input. The district follows state regulations and guidelines for notification to parents. Timelines are followed, the school psychologist is trained in giving and rating assessments, assessment procedures are followed, evaluation reports are given to parents. Parent input is obtained before meetings or assessments, parents are provided parent rights booklet and the district follows the requirements outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of Meets Requirements identified under appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

Out of Compliance

24:05:24.01:01. Students with disabilities defined. Students with disabilities are students evaluated in accordance with chapter 24:05:25 as having a diagnosed disability which adversely affects educational performance, and who, because of those disabilities, need special education or special education and related services. If it is determined through an appropriate evaluation, under chapter 24:05:25, that a student has one of the disabilities identified in this chapter, but only needs a related service and not special education, the student is not a student with a disability under this article. If, consistent with this chapter, the related service required by the student is considered special education, the student is a student with a disability under this article.

Through interview and review of the student record, the monitoring team concluded a student was placed on an IEP without appropriately determining if the student was a student with a disability, if the disability adversely affected educational performance or if they required special education. The eligibility determination for this student appeared to be made by the special educator since only their signature appeared on the eligibility document. The IEP written for the student only addressed the need for the related service of counseling.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used-

- Teacher file reviews
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- FERPA disclosure statement
- Access logs
- Complaint and hearing data
- Parent surveys
- Confidentiality page
- Telephone logs
- Confidentiality forms

Meets Requirements

The steering committee concluded areas of Meets Requirements to be the student transfer of rights, the district's use of the parent's right booklet, implementation of the 5 day notice requirement, provision of consent information to parents and district confidentiality procedures. Other areas of Meets Requirements identified by the steering committee include the district's destruction of records policy and plan for independent education evaluations.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of Meets Requirements identified under procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used –

- File reviews
- Parent surveys

- Teacher surveys
- Teacher report form
- Child count
- Student IEPs

Meets Requirements

Procedures relative to the individual education plan are implemented, including comprehensive plan procedures for transition, guidelines for writing individual education programs, the use of the state approved IEP form, procedures for dealing with IEP issues and guidelines when inviting correct people to IEP meeting.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee concluded the district needs to work on transition planning for children.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the areas of Meets Requirements identified under IEP content as concluded by the steering committee. Additional information regarding IEP content is provided under areas out of compliance.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee indicated that the district needs to work on transition planning for children as an area in need of improvement. Through a review of two student files the monitoring team noted that transition assessment information was not included in the student's present levels of performance, therefore making it difficult for the team to sufficiently address the student transition needs through recommended services or goals and objectives. The monitoring team recommends that the district review the process used to bring forward evaluation information needed to develop present levels of performance.

Out of compliance

24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the students identified disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. In 4 files reviewed, present levels of performance were not linked to evaluation and did not contain the student's academic strengths, needs or their involvement in the general curriculum. For example, functional assessment information was available regarding a student's strengths and needs in the student's disability area of listening comprehension. The present levels of performance stated skills in reading and the annual goals were developed in the areas of written language, grammar and vocabulary. In another example, functional assessment information was available regarding a student's transition needs; however, the student's strength and needs in this area were not included in the present levels of performance. Another student had extensive functional assessment information relative to their disability areas, however, only one or two skills were noted in the present levels of performance resulting in no link between the annual goals and the present levels of performance.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions; consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used –

- File reviews
- Parent survey
- Teacher survey
- Behavior form
- IEP form
- Comprehensive plan
- Budget information

Meets Requirements

Based on data reviewed, the steering committee concluded the school has procedures in place to meet all state regulations and guidelines concerning LRE and that the district has successfully placed children in their least restrictive environment.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of Meets Requirements identified under least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.